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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001122

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
BANGKOK FOR WIN DAYTON
DS/OP/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2013
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: STAYAWAY HOLDING TENUOUSLY, NO DEMONSTRATIONS -
MDC MASS ACTION DAY TWO

REF: A. HARARE 1101
[B](#). HARARE 1097
[C](#). HARARE 1081

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

[1](#). (C) In television and radio broadcasts, as well as by telephoning and visiting business owners directly, GOZ officials exhorted businesses to open on June 3. In the face of this pressure between 50 - 90 percent of businesses remained closed on June 3 nationwide. The police, though present, were less visible on the street in downtown Harare on June 3. It appears that ordinary Zimbabweans have not heeded the call to take to the streets in the numbers and with the defiance the MDC was hoping for. End Summary.

GOZ Exhorts Businesses to Open

[2](#). (U) In a Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation television broadcast on June 2, Minister of Industry and International Trade S. Mumbengegwi exhorted workers to show up for work, and businesses to open on risk losing their licenses and permits. According to MDC Presidential Advisor, Gandhi Mudzingwa, GOZ officials were calling the directors of large companies in Harare and threatening them with license revocation if they did not open.

[3](#). (C) According to PAO a Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation reporter personally exhorted a Time Bank office in downtown Harare to open. Virginia Pinto, an independent Mutare city councilwoman, said police went door to door to small businesses and shops in downtown Mutare on June 2 - 3 demanding that they open or risk license revocation. For the past several workdays in Mutare police visited banks and took down the names and addresses of managers and workers, threatening to force them to work if the bank did not open. Mudzingwa said that there were no planned demonstrations or marches on June 3, and that the MDC leadership was instead focused on maintaining the stayaway in the face of mounting GOZ pressure on businesses to open.

MDC Officials Arrested

[4](#). (U) On June 2, MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai was arrested for non-compliance with a May 31 court order prohibiting the MDC planned mass action. He was released on the same day after signing a warned and cautioned statement. According to the MDC, Shadow Minister of Home Affairs Tendai Biti; Job Sikhala, the MDC MP for St. Mary's (in the Harare area); Japhet Ndabeni Ncube, the MDC Mayor of Bulawayo; Milton Gwetu, an MDC MP in Bulawayo; Silas Mangono, an MDC MP from Masvingo; Jobert Mudzumwe a member of the MDC National Executive; Charlton Hwende, a member of the MDC National Youth wing; and several MDC officials in other parts of the country were arrested on June 2 and still in custody on June [3](#).

Total Numbers Arrested

[5](#). (U) Reports of the total number of people arrested nationwide in connection with the mass action varied; the total number was likely about 275 by June 3. This includes 121 arrested in Harare, 56 in Chitungwiza (a high density suburb of Harare), 21 in Bulawayo, 25 in Masvingo, 3 in Victoria Falls, and unconfirmed numbers in Mutare, Gweru, and Kwekwe. Most of those arrested on June 2, were released by June 3. By June 3 police had not allowed MDC officials access to the arrestees in Masvingo, nor had they allowed food to be brought in.

[6](#). (SBU) An American citizen reported that he and his party of 6 were sitting in the lobby of Harare's five star Meikles

hotel yesterday when a group of half a dozen war vets came into the hotel shouting and pushing security guards. When they spotted the Americans, they stood about 3 feet away and started yelling, "White animals, don't you look at us; get out of Zimbabwe; we don't want you here." The guards and concierge came to assist, but when they realized that the assailants were war vets, they "froze in their tracks," according to the American. The war vets left shortly thereafter. The Americans were frightened by their ordeal and plan to leave Zimbabwe today, as previously scheduled.

17. (SBU) Embassy has been unable to confirm any reports of casualties. The MDC, which yesterday reported that 3 people were shot in Highfield (near Harare), today retreated from that position. The GOZ has said there were no casualties, except for an unidentified person, which the government-owned Herald reported was stoned to death by MDC supporters.

Stayaway Successful - But Losing Ground

18. (U) Driving around Harare on June 3, Poloff observed that about 80 percent of shops in downtown Harare remained closed, and 90 percent of businesses in the light industrial areas of Harare were closed.

19. (SBU) Police were visible in groups of 2 - 4 in downtown areas, some were armed with automatic rifles, but for the most part they assumed very relaxed postures.

10. (C) According to Sheba Dube, head of the Bulawayo chapter of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) about 75 percent of businesses in downtown Bulawayo were closed on June 3. According to Pinto, about 50 percent of businesses in Mutare remained closed on June 3.

Comment:

11. (C) Having quelled prospective demonstrations on June 2, and arrested a few hundred MDC officials and activists, police and security forces were less visible on the street on June 3. The GOZ strategy to counter the mass action on June 3 focused instead on exhorting businesses to ignore the stayaway, though most of them remained closed anyway. The momentum has clearly shifted in the GOZ's favor and it is possible the MDC bit off more than it could chew by calling for street demonstrations and a "final push". It appears that ordinary Zimbabweans have not heeded the call in the numbers and with the defiance the MDC was hoping for. End Comment.

SULLIVAN